

How to Cope with the Conversion Process: Hints for Spouses and Significant Others

- Love – remember that you fell in love with this person and that the qualities that you hold dearest in them will not change in this process. This will go a long way in helping both of you.
- Choice – remember that this is their choice, not yours or your parents or your in-laws. But also be ready to hear from your parents, in-laws, relatives, and friends who aren't as close to the process any number of things, including, "How nice it is that your spouse/significant other is doing this for you." Or, if this is seen as a step away from his or her family, be prepared to deal with hostility and be the rock and support for each other.
 - Be open with your families and help them learn, too. Invite them to synagogue events, classes, Shabbat dinners, etc. Supply them with information on Judaism and the conversion process. If they have difficulties ask them to join you in a meeting with your clergy or one with theirs or both. It may help to close the gap and heal wounds before they start.
- Keep an open mind and be willing to try new observances, new ways of observance, or even revisit observances you had determined were not for you.
 - Both you and your partner will need to be willing to compromise on these things.
- If you need to, remind your partner that you've already had x number of years to learn this and you have found your comfort level, but that you are still willing to try things at a slow pace.
- Take classes together at the synagogue and/or JCC about Judaism, conversion, whatever. You may be surprised at the things you thought you knew but didn't.
- When your partner starts doing and trying things too fast for you or you feel that Judaism (and/or conversion) has become the soul focus of life, remind him/her that you understand this is new and neat and interesting, but there are other important parts of life. You both have the rest of your lives to explore Judaism together and you need to make the time for those other important things.
- When things get difficult, talk. Talk to each other, to friends in a similar situation (you'll make several in the conversion process): Jim and I are available (give phone and e-mail address). And your clergy are wonderful sources in helping guide both your "converting" partner and both of you as a couple.
- Make a special effort to find time for the two of you in both Jewish and non-Jewish contexts. date night. movies, Shabbat dinner. Your relationship is important and is the grounding of what will get you through the difficult times. Keep it healthy.
- ALWAYS keep the lines of dialogue open with each other and remember you LOVE each other.